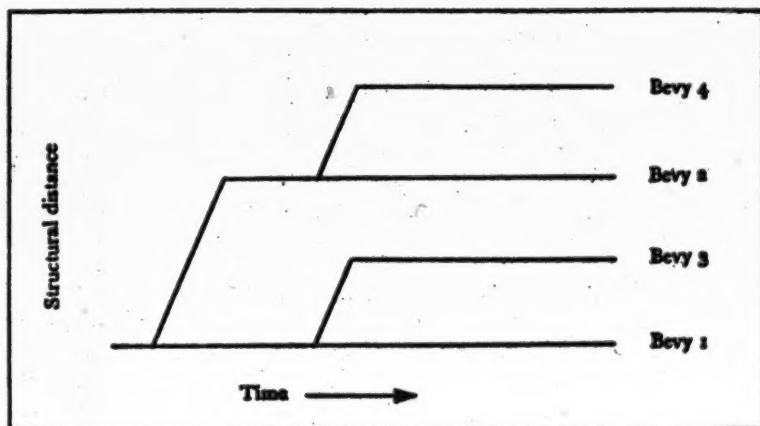


231 cattle did not give rise to any cleavage of interest which was not
262 already present in the residential system.
727

[557] The system could also be manipulated by disputes about
595 succession. If a man had many be vies of wives there was usually no
611 doubt concerning which was the senior bevy and who was the great
wife in it. Yet in general it was not possible to rank a man's be vies
in a simple linear order of seniority, any more than the segments

DIAGRAM 3. RANKING OF BEVIES



to which they corresponded could be ordered in this way. In topological terms, ranking of be vies and of segments among the Ngoni was only partially, not simply, ordered. An example, illustrated in Diagram 3, will make this clear.

Suppose a man started with bevy 1 and then took part of it to form bevy 2. Later he took another part of bevy 1 to form bevy 3 and took part of bevy 2 to form bevy 4. With four be vies of wives, his senior bevy was bevy 1 and his great wife was the leader of bevy 1. Her eldest son was his principal heir, and if she had no sons the eldest son by the next wife in her bevy became heir. But suppose there was no son by any wife in bevy 1. Which band provided the principal heir? It seems clear that bevy 4 did not, at least not if there were sons in bevy 2, for bevy 2 was senior to bevy 4. Bevy 2 might be regarded as senior to bevy 3, for it was formed from bevy 1 earlier. On the other hand, with reference to bevy 2, bevy 3 was merely a part of bevy 1 and hence the search for heirs should be continued in bevy 3 before shifting to bevy 2. Unfortunately I

have no clear history of this kind of situation, but it seems possible⁵⁹⁵ that when there was no heir who could clearly claim ascendancy⁶¹¹ over the whole of a primal segment, the segment then split into two. Thus in our example, if there were sons in beviés 2 and 3 but not in bevié 1, the primal segment formed for the great wife in bevié 1 would in the next generation have split into two segments, one led by the heir in bevié 2 and the other by the heir in bevié 3. This hypothesis would be in accord with some of the disputes which I^[578] recorded between eldest sons by different mothers, each claiming to be the principal heir of their father.

Information drawn from village histories shows that there were sometimes similar disputes about which son of the great wife should be heir. The eldest son could be passed over if he were an obvious fool, and there was, therefore, the possibility of conflict between those who thought him a fool and those who did not. When the first wife married did not become the great wife, her eldest son was sometimes older than the great wife's son, and was sometimes his rival as heir. The contradiction between superordination by age and by status of mother among half-brothers brought up in the same vicinity led to conflict. A fourth mode of conflict was between a man's son and his lieutenant. Where the son was unsuccessful in commanding the loyalty of his father's dependants, effective leadership in his father's segment sometimes passed to the lieutenant.

We should, I think, be mistaken if we regarded these modes of dispute as causes. They were rather the idioms in which, in this particular system, rivalry was expressed between contiguous segments. Many dependants brought power and prestige for their lord, and the struggle for dependants went on within this remarkably flexible and yet orderly system. A man attracted dependants by remaining loyal to his lord; yet the more dependants he gained the more he differentiated himself from his lord. If a man was not the rightful heir in one segment, then he could try to gain the support of the lord of a higher segment and hope thereby to alter the distribution of power in the lower one. This consideration became particularly important after the arrival of Europeans, who^[648] exercised control over the whole State and at the same time were ignorant of and not bound by the values which maintained the old system.

We have mentioned the possibility of conflict between heirs arising from the method of ranking beviés. The same principle of ranking applied to segments and headquarters as well as to beviés of wives, and there were similar possibilities of conflict. In certain situations it appears as if that which was founded first was dominant,⁵⁷⁸⁶¹¹⁶²¹⁵⁹⁵

557 and in other situations that which was founded last. The head-
578 quarters of the highest segment was in some sense capital of the
611 nation, yet chieftainship had already passed from it and it was less
621 important in other ways than the headquarters founded by the
[643] reigning chief. This apparent contradiction applied within every
large segment. We have endeavoured to isolate these different
contexts by our distinction between primal and residual segments,
but as soon as we attempt to arrange villages or beves of wives in a
linear order without reference to the relationship of their associated
segments to one another, the contradiction reappears.

621 A clear and accepted sequence of heirs would have been
611 appropriate to a segmentary system in which segments continued to
hold together in all circumstances. Ngoni segments did not do this,
and the simple linear sequence of heirs was lacking. The successive
formation of inferior segments implied increased structural separation
between the first inferior segment to be formed and the head-
quarters, and hence less likelihood that the former would provide
the main heir. As in lineage systems, the farther back the point of
departure from the main line the greater the structural separation
from it. But whereas in lineage systems it is the junior lines which
are continually diverging from the main stem, in the Ngoni system
the main heir was the first to break away from his father, who
remained longer in close contact with his junior sons. Seniority
within the newly formed undivided segment implied early differen-
tiation within it, and hence early separation from its headquarters.
Thus, the general principle of increasing separation with the
passage of time, together with the particular principle of segment
formation in order of seniority, combined to make a system of great
flexibility despite essential regularity and uniformity. On the
death of each segment head there was a shift of power within his
segment and to some extent a formal recognition of the structural
separation which had proceeded gradually during his lifetime. The
headquarters founded by successive heads of segments persisted as
the home of groups whose interests they symbolised. The history
of the segments and of the nation itself was embodied in the
relationships enduring between successive headquarters.

557 When a small segment was founded it was usually manned by
611 people drawn from the rump of the immediately superior segment,
621 that is, from those men and women in the superior segment who
had not already been allocated to some inferior segment within it.
However it is clear that this rule was often over-ridden. When the
[622] lord of a large segment formed a new inferior segment for a wife or
son he was able to command the services of everyone within his

segment, even of those who had been allocated to existing inferior segments. If he thought fit he could shift them from one inferior segment to another within his own segment. This process was particularly relevant to the formation of new segments for the great wives of men who were the heirs or lords of large segments. A new lord, making his great wife's segment after the death of his father, did not confine himself to the rump of his father's segment but selected men he thought he could trust from anywhere within his father's primal segment, whether or not they had made segments of their own. Similarly a lord sometimes took a man who occupied an unimportant position in the segment of one of his wives and promoted him to be lieutenant in a newly formed bevy. The more important the lord or heir, the greater the structural distance his dependants could be moved. Thus while the processes by which the Paramount Chief and a man with only a few followers made segments for beves of wives were formally the same, the consequences were quite different. In the former case, many hundreds of people were involved and many key men were shifted in their allegiance in order to provide the new segment with lieutenants and followers. In the latter, few people were concerned and the event was not of general interest. The formal processes remained the same at all levels in society, but what in one case was essentially a political action in which a Paramount Chief acted as head of a State was in the other largely a matter of domestic reorganization. It is characteristic of the Ngoni State that the transition from one state of affairs to the other was a gradual one.

Occasionally a man moved himself from one segment to another on his own initiative. This happened only infrequently and it seems probable that it was only when a man who had quarrelled with his own segment sought asylum with the reigning chief that a move of this kind could be made. Chibambo records an incident in which many men transferred from their former segments to one newly formed by the reigning chief, but adds that later they returned to their old segments. A similar incident from the Fort Jameson group is noted below.⁸ Despite these exceptions it nevertheless remains true that for the most part a man's affiliation to his segment was fixed and could be altered only by the actions of his political superiors.

We have spoken of the formation of segments, but not yet of their disappearance. Many minor segments faded away because their members died or because they were moved elsewhere by a lord. Sometimes a segment ceased to be an effective social unit

⁸ Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 251; see p. 140.

63/ where other states, if states they were, organized themselves on
648 quite different lines. Ngoni external political relations were
174 restricted to acts of war. They harried their neighbours but did not
bring them into enduring political relationship. When fission
occurred, when the Ngoni State split into two, then indeed the
fighting that took place was war between segments, and for a while
an inter-segment relationship which had been internal became
external and was mediated through force. Relations of this kind
did not persist, for independent Ngoni groups soon diverged from
each other, seeking weaker enemies.

5. *Lineage systems compared*

128 Our argument in the preceding section was directed to showing
that the old Ngoni society was a state in which internal political
relations were largely determined by a continually segmenting
residential system. We compared it with other societies in which
lineage systems provided the basis for political relations. We now
have to ask how did this residential system differ from these similar
systems; was it a kind of lineage system?

63/ Gluckman has set out nine criteria by which a lineage system
648 may be distinguished and which we may apply to the residential
121 system.²⁷ In the first place we must expand the meaning of the word
descent before we can call an Ngoni segment a unilineal descent
group. However it seems justifiable to regard the process by which
172 an Ngoni captive sundered the ties linking him to his natal com-
597 munity and was then incorporated in a new one as a kind of social
death and re-birth.²⁸ We may then speak of a captive being
socially descended from his lord. More familiarly, we must use
descent to include social descent from a man when biological
descent is from his kinsman acting as pro-husband for him after his
death, and from a woman when biological descent is from her
linked junior co-wife. With these extensions of meaning, we may
regard the residential system as composed of unilineal descent
groups.

Lineage segments, particularly small ones, are usually exoga-
mous, whereas no Ngoni segment was automatically an exogamous
unit. True agnatic kin could not marry one another, but the quasi-
agnatic relationship between a lord and his dependants was not a
bar, and a man and woman with the same captor were free to
marry each other, even though they both called their lord *father*.

²⁷ Gluckman, in Mitchell and Barnes, *Lamba village*, pp. 4-5.

²⁸ cf. Warner's description of the passing of light-skinned Negroes in the
United States into the White caste as 'social death'.

The genealogies which related members of one segment to those of another were made up not only of links from father to son but also from lord to dependant, and were expressed in terms of the names of segments rather than the names of the people who headed them. A man related himself to the Paramount Chief not by his own genealogy but by the pedigree of the segment to which he belonged.⁶¹ Although the number of links in such a pedigree may have been half a dozen or more, it did not cover more than two or three generations, whereas in most lineage systems remembered genealogies cover many more generations. The present kinship nomenclature, which mainly employs words of Nsenga origin, does not group relatives on a lineage, or segmental, basis but by generation. Presumably the system of nomenclature in use during the early stages of the Ngoni migration was similar to the present Zulu system in which lineage categories are used slightly. Tribes like the Shona and Cewa, from whom many captives were taken, employ systems of nomenclature with great lineage emphasis, but this emphasis is patrilineal among the former and matrilineal among the latter. The difficulty of combining patrilineal and matrilineal categories may have prompted the emergence of a generation system of nomenclature.⁶²

Another point of difference between the Ngoni and many people with lineage systems is that, other than possibly the rites associated with choosing a new village site, there seem to have been no ritual observances or ancestor cult which would have differentiated one segment from another and united the various segments of lower order within a higher one. The only ancestors to whom supplication was made were those of the Paramount Chief. They were believed to be concerned with the well-being of the whole nation, and when sacrifices were made to them, the officiants were not their agnatic descendants but the Paramount Chief's lieutenants. We may, however, regard the byre in the headquarters village as a ceremonial, rather than a ritual, centre for a large segment.⁶³

In these four respects the Ngoni residential system differed from most lineage systems. On the other hand, in respect of other criteria it was like them. A segment recognized its identity and unity in contrast to other groups; rights and obligations of segment membership were distinguished from those of kinship; segments endured in time beyond the death of their founding members;⁶⁴

⁶¹ cf. Read, 'Tradition', p. 466.

⁶² cf. Barnes, 'Fort Jameson Ngoni', pp. 221-3; Gluckman, 'Kinship and marriage', pp. 170-1; Holliman, *How kinship*, pp. 1-18; Pretorius, 'Terms of relationship', pp. 44-6.

61/ segments nested in the same way as lineage segments; and a seg-
63/ ment could be referred to by the name of its original head. A
59/ residential segment was not associated with a particular locality in
62/ quite the same way as lineage segments often are among settled
63/ peoples, for even the State itself was not tied to any particular
place. Within the area occupied by the State at any one time, the
villages belonging to one major segment seem to have intermingled
with those of another, for there were not any temporary boundaries
defining major segment areas, even for those led by regional
governors. But smaller segments, occupying single villages or less,
may be said to have been associated with a particular locality at
any one time.

Our concept of a lineage system would then require con-
12/ siderable stretching to include the Ngoni residential system. It
71/ seems preferable to employ the wide term 'continually segmenting
61/ systems' when speaking of this general class of system, and to
distinguish within this category a number of different varieties.
62/ Lineage systems belong to one variety, the Ngoni residential
63/ system to another. These two varieties do not exhaust the category.
The Nyakyusa system of continually bifurcating states appears to
belong to a third variety, and there may be more.

There are other criteria which have been used to distinguish
different varieties of lineage system, and which we may apply
summarily to the Ngoni residential system. Despite the great
importance of women in the system, it was clearly a patrilineal
and not a matrilineal system. It was a graded system with a single
head to each segment, like the Zulu and unlike the egalitarian
Nuer. The system had a single apex, one highest segment embracing
the whole society, like the Gusii and unlike the multi-capped society
of the Tallensi. As a corollary of this it had sharp boundaries and
did not form part of a chain of interlinked societies. There was
little economic differentiation save in the control of cattle and there
[183] was, on the surface, complete cultural homogeneity imposed by
the State.

77/ The characteristic formation of rump segments is lacking in
61/ many lineage systems, but is found among the Zulu and in the
62/ Swazi lineage,⁴¹ and perhaps more widely, although in both these
63/ societies the process does not seem to have been as greatly developed
as among the Ngoni. Among the Zulu and Swazi it led to a series
of homesteads or villages corresponding to successive holders of the
office of lineage head or king. Among the Ngoni not only was each

⁴¹ cf. Holleman, 'Twee-eenhedenbeginnel van die Zulu' and 'Zulu isigodi';
Bryant, *Dictionary*, pp. 739f, s.v. *isizinda*; and Kuper, *African Aristocracy*, pp. 40f.

successive head of a major segment memorialized in this way, but the major divisions of his polygynous household as well.

6. *Splitting the State*

When splits occurred in the State, the cleavages were along segmentary, and not age-set, lines. The headquarters of the highest segment was differentiated from the major subdivisions within that segment, and the various divergent groups can be identified by the different segments which they represented. Once fission had taken place, a realignment of segments was sometimes necessary. When after the death of Zwangendaba his great wife's segment was split, in each divergent group the man who was nearest in the line of succession to head of her segment claimed to be the rightful heir, and on the strength of that claim assumed leadership of the group.

Fission in the State was the end result of segmentation within it. Here we are using these two terms for two different processes. By segmentation we mean the process by which any social group becomes subdivided internally while retaining its own unity and cohesion. By fission we mean the process by which a social group divides into two or more distinct groups, so that the original group disappears as a social entity.⁴³ Fission in the Ngoni State occurred without affecting the arrangement of segments within each group, but did disrupt the highest segment of all, within which the divergent groups had hitherto been contained. Segmentation was a process of growth taking place at all levels but particularly at the bottom of the hierarchy of political groups, while fission was a process occurring only at the highest level. The process of segmentation in one generation could not alter the formal arrangement of higher segments determined in the previous generation, even though with each generation there was in fact an effective shift in the distribution of political power accompanied by spatial differentiation. The process of fission did not bring into being any new segments, but merely dissolved the highest segment of all as a cohering political unit. The two processes were thus formally and in reality quite distinct, even though it is clear that they were not independent of one another. Increasing divergence of interest found expression at first in the creation of separate segments and ultimately in the formation of separate states.

The processes of segmentation and of spatial differentiation within the State were in general peaceful. Fission was a hazardous

⁴³ This use of terms differs from that of Fortes. He uses 'segmentation' to refer to a state of internal subdivision within a group, and 'fission' to refer to the process of internal subdivision. cf. Fortes, *Web of kinship, passim*. I am indebted to Mrs. U. P. Mayer for this observation.

619 brought more support for his lord; but as the segment expanded
631 his chances of setting himself up as a chief increased and his loyalty
became less certain. Thus the appeal to armed force came only as
one phase in a general struggle for power carried on simultaneously
at many different levels and by a variety of methods. The con-
flicting ambitions of each lord, each a potential rival of the State,
[669] combined to maintain the State and to reduce the likelihood of
successful fission.

The conflict between identification with one's lord and
692 differentiation from him, between what Fortes has called the
643 centripetal and centrifugal forces in a segmentary society, is brought
681 out clearly in the enforcement of the death penalty. Wiese implies
631 that only the Paramount Chief had the legal power to sentence
adulterers to death and that this offence was the ground for the
[684] majority of death sentences.⁴⁸ However, my own informants stated
that senior lieutenants did sometimes sentence people to death
without referring the matter to the Paramount Chief. The Chief
would later come to hear of an incident of this kind and would then
either praise the lieutenant for acting in the interests of the Chief
and for ruling his people well, or else abuse him for usurping the
powers of the Chief and warn him to be more careful in future. A
successful lieutenant might establish his own major segment and
eventually his own State; but if he moved in this direction prema-
[687] turely he was likely to be killed for treason. This same inherent
conflict exists to-day, albeit with different groupings and different
sanctions.

7. *Stability*

611 The most striking differences between the residential system
619 and most lineage systems were the high rate of segmentation, and
178 the flexibility of the system. Segmentation in a lineage system
depends basically on the unalterable processes of human repro-
duction and maturation. Until a man's children become adults
his agnatic segment cannot split. The Ngoni, by recruiting many
[161] of their members when they were already grown up, were able to
[597] increase their population at a prodigious rate and with it the degree
of segmentation of the State. As the Ngoni army increased in size,
so it became easier for them to capture more people, so that what
we may describe as an inflationary spiral in population was set up.
The Ngoni State was like a snowball which grows larger and larger
as it is pushed from place to place, but still remains uniform
throughout. At last it becomes unwieldy and must be broken

⁴⁸ Wiese, 'Expedição', pp. 471-2, and 'Geschichte', pp. 189-90.

before it can be moved further. The same accumulation of snow then begins again with each fragment. 178
611

We can readily see that this system was one of great flexibility. 619
The rules of the system were fairly definite, and the principles of agnatic descent and primogeniture were never violated. Yet it was a system very susceptible to manipulation, and one appropriate to a society with a rapidly expanding population recruited mainly by capture. The relationships between a man and his wives, his sons, and his other dependants provided the basis for differentiation within his segment, but they did not determine in advance which wife should be made leader of a bevy, which bevy should get most dependants, which of his younger sons he should favour, which dependants he would appoint as lieutenants. [595]

Without a continual inflow of captives this wide pattern of segmentation might not have produced anything more than a lineage system on the same lines as the Zulu and Swazi. The captives were the bulk which swelled the segments, which benefited one segment at the expense of another. This system provided quasi-agnatic affiliation to people whose actual parentage was unknown or irrelevant. Because of this source of supply, much greater segmentation was achieved in each generation than was possible in an orthodox lineage system. The whole system lasted only seventy-seven years for the Fort Jameson group, corresponding roughly to three generations, yet almost the whole population of the Ngoni groups stemming from Zwangendaba, numbering perhaps half a million people, could at the end of that time trace quasi-agnatic ascent back to him or his forebears. [727]
[597]
[173]

Membership of age-sets gave rise to one set of bonds which cut across the lines of segmentary division; those bonds created by marriage gave rise to another. A man in one segment was linked by ties of affinity to men in several others, and because of these ties interacted with them on formal and informal occasions, exchanged cattle with them, and had a joint interest with them in their common descendants. Though segments were not exogamous, a wife from a structurally distant segment had in general a higher status and was more likely to be selected as leader of a bevy than was one from the same minor segment as her husband. Within a segment a son of the lord might marry the daughter of a lieutenant, and lieutenants sometimes married daughters of their lord, thus blending the bonds of affinity with those of quasi-agnation. As the heads of segments, married women played a more important role than we usually associate with them in strongly patrilineal societies. The lady of a segment retained her connexion with the segments [556]
[611]
[571]
[582]
[554]
[522]
611
602

611 to which she had belonged before her marriage, and in particular
602 sent some of her children to her parents to be cared for until
[855] adolescence. In this way a web of affinal ties was built up, cutting
across both the residential and age-set systems and acting against
the fissile tendencies in the former.⁴⁷

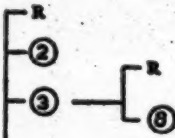
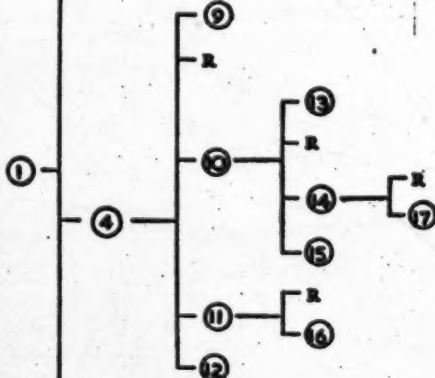
561 The ties that bound a man to his age-mates and to his
602 matrilineal kin cut across those linking him to his lord and to his
dependants. Nevertheless, it seems probable that even without this
arrangement of cross-cutting ties, the segmentary system itself was
64 not easily fissile. The State as a whole was primarily held together
182 by its enemies, the external enemies who made it unsafe for small
bodies of Ngoni to venture across the no-man's-land on their own,
and the internal rivals who competed for the Paramount Chief's
favour and who bided their time until they could lead off their
major segments as independent states. The flexibility of the
system allowed men to achieve power within it, and provided a way
of balancing the interests of different groups, as well as making
possible the few instances of fission that did occur. The Paramount
643 Chief was powerful, not only because of his mystical attributes and
of the military successes of his people, but because he was the
government. Through him the common interests of the tribe as a
whole were expressed in an organized manner as against the
interests of minority groups. Despite its segmentary form, Ngoni
society was a State.

177 In later years two changes took place which increased the
stability of the State, at least from a short-term point of view. In
the first place, the external environment altered due to the pene-
tration into the central African hinterland by Arabs, Portuguese
and British. With this topic we shall deal in Chapter III. The
178 second change, which seems to have taken place among the Ngoni
631 of northern Nyasaland, was in the internal organization of the
State. In that particular group, neighbouring tribes were brought
[626] under subjection as political groups, not as individuals, and the
conquered peoples were either allowed to retain their own chiefs
as subordinate rulers or else were attached in large batches to
various important headquarters. A distinction emerged between
[563] the aristocracy and the conquered peoples, and the army was no
[701] longer simply the aggregation of age-sets but included quasi-
professionals supplied by a near-by unconquered Cewa chief
Mwase Kasungu, who were armed with guns. Similar changes
may well have taken place among the Ngoni groups in Tanganyika,
who were more closely involved with the slave trade to the coast

⁴⁷ See the discussion of affinal linking in my *Marriage*, pp. 10-11.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

DIAGRAM 4. OLD AND NEW POLITICAL SYSTEMS
RELATED

Old political system	New political system		
Major residential segments	Subordinate Native Authorities showing country numbers	Superior Native Authorities	Districts and Territories
			Mzimba District, Nyasaland
	9 4 13 10 14 17 15 11 16 12	Ngoni Superior Native Authority	Fort Jameson District, Northern Rhodesia
	5 6	Fort Manning Council of Chiris (with one Cewa chief)	Lilongwe District, Nyasaland
			Kahama District, Tanganyika Territory

⑨ Residential segment, numbered as in Table II.

9 County.

R Residual segment.

1 [County numbers correspond to those on map on page 120 category 116. Analyst]

[p. 122]

[The notes to this chart are on page 123. Analyst]

1: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

TRANSITION

123

between their leaders are influenced by both their relative position in the Native Authority scheme and the position of the county segments, as well as by new interests that have emerged. The formal relationship between the alignments of segments and counties is set out in Diagram 4. This diagram also shows the relationship, at a higher level, between some of the other independent Ngoni groups and the major political divisions of British Africa. 621
631
634

In each county the chief, who does not live in the capital but in a village of his own, is head of the county segment and it seems probable that during the early years of the Administration it was the affiliation of villages within their old residential segments that provided the basis for the groupings of convenience which eventually crystallized into counties. In one or two instances succession to headship of the segment and county has been plainly manipulated, but the traditional rules of succession have not been outraged. Where the county segment is a residual one, the county chief may be also head of some segment of higher order. Thus the chief of county 11 is head of primal segment 11 although his county is only the residual segment after the formation of segment 16; county chief 14 is head of primal segment 14; and the Paramount Chief is head of primal segments 4 and 10. [648]
[557]

4-1
^ Three Ngoni groups stemming from Zwangendaba are not shown on this diagram. 611
621
631

(a) A group under Magodi separated itself from either segment 2 or 3 and is now settled in Lundazi District, Northern Rhodesia. 631

(b) A group led by Zulu Gama is now settled in Songea District, Tanganyika Territory. The segment corresponding to this group appears to have been formed within segment 1, but I do not know what relation it bears to the other segments nor by what process it was formed. The western part of this group is still led by a descendant of Zulu Gama, but a descendant of one of his associates named Mboanani now leads the eastern part.

(c) A group under Ciwele ndhlovu is settled in Dowa District, Nyasaland. Some writers say it was formed within segment 4, others within the residue of segment 1. He was a lieutenant of either Zwangendaba or Mpezeni.

The two Ngoni groups which do not stem from Zwangendaba cannot be fitted into the diagram. They are located as follows.

(d) The Southern Nyasaland Ngoni, who broke away from the Southern Rhodesia Ndebele and who were led originally by Mputa, are now settled in Ncheu and Dedza Districts, Nyasaland, and in Circunscriçao of Angónia, District of Tete, Portuguese East Africa.

(e) The Ngoni group led by Sohangane are now settled in the lower Limpopo Valley, Gazaland, Portuguese East Africa.

There are a few small Ngoni groups in the Shire Valley, Nyasaland, some of which have their own minor chiefs. There are also many Ngoni men and women in the towns of southern and eastern Africa, but they are not organized into political groups on a tribal basis.

i [These notes refer to the chart on page 122 - Analyst]

the reigning chief is the grandson of the founder of the county segment, there is one minor segment founded by his father within which he has founded his own segment. In counties where there have been more than three successive heads of the segment, there will be more than one segment intervening between the county segment and that of the reigning chief. With the decline in polygyny, most chiefs have had only one bevy of wives or even a single wife, so that they have been each able to found only one segment. It will be convenient to speak of 'chief's segment' for a segment founded by a reigning chief, and of 'regal segment' for a segment founded by a former chief. With this nomenclature, each chief's segment becomes regal on the death of its founder.

This terminology links up with our use of the terms *regal* and *chief's villages*, as I have defined them elsewhere.²⁴ The headquarters of a regal segment is a regal village, and the headquarters of a chief's segment is a chief's village. Similarly the headquarters of a county segment is a capital village.

In general we may refer to capital, regal and chief's villages collectively as royal villages, for they represent the chieftainship, and the history of the State, as against the diverse particular interests represented by the villages led by commoners. Four minor chiefs are, however, not agnatic descendants of Zwangendaba, and we can call their segments and villages royal only with qualification. Two of these four chiefs use the royal descent-name, and they all generally ally themselves with their royal colleagues. Yet there are many Ngoni in these pseudo-royal counties, particularly true agnatic descendants of Zwangendaba or of regional governors, who are scornful of the royal pretensions of their county chiefs.

Some of the junior kinsmen of Zwangendaba became leaders of independent Ngoni groups. None of the junior sons of Mpezeni I became independent leaders but some of them or their descendants did become county chiefs. None of the junior sons of Nsingu or Mpezeni II became chiefs and under the present system none of them is likely to do so. Nevertheless they founded segments, and this has happened in every junior line. In each county, as well as the county, regal and chief's segments, whose founders have been on the direct line of succession to the chieftainship, there are also segments founded by junior members of the chiefly house. These we shall term *cadet segments* and the headquarters of a cadet segment a *cadet village*.

²⁴ Barnes, 'Fort Jameson Ngoni', pp. 204-6. In an earlier publication, 'Political development', p. 106, I used the adjective *private* in place of *regal* and *chief's*.

inefficient workers on the local tobacco farms, where the ties that link them to the near-by villages with their marriages, funerals, and beer parties are still operative, and where the wages are much lower than in Southern Rhodesia. Secondly, Ngoni tend to suspect the good intentions of any non-African, however lavish he may be with his presents, and for this reason are reluctant to enter into agreements with them the social consequences of which they cannot foresee. 648
662
[461]
[186]

2. Rivals of the Paramount Chief

In pre-conquest times the death of the head of the State was followed by a struggle between rival heirs and by fission of the State. Under British colonial rule these struggles cannot be carried on by force of arms, and it is difficult to split the tribe when there is nowhere for the dissident section to move to and when Administrative recognition is an important condition for political existence. Nevertheless the same struggles continue even if in a different guise. 643
648

One of the most interesting incidents in the struggles between rival groups for the chieftainship occurred in 1903 and hinged on an aspect of segmentation within the residential system which we have not so far discussed. It was customary for the heir to a large segment founded by his father to place one wife in the headquarters of that segment as well as establishing his beves of wives with their own inferior segments. The eldest son of the selected wife grew up to be in charge of the headquarters and came to be identified with his father's father, the founder of the headquarters, as against his father who was lord of its segment. Thus, for example, Zwangendaba, heir to segment 1, founded segment 18 for his own great wife, but also placed one of his wives in the headquarters of segment 1, the segment founded by his father for his great wife. Similarly Mpezeni, as son of Zwangendaba, placed one of his wives in the headquarters of segment 4, which by then had replaced the annihilated segment 18. In this matter the Ngoni seem to have differed from the Zulu, for among them, according to Bryant, the *isi-zinda*, son of the placed wife, represents his own father as against the father's main heir.¹ 611
643

In 1903 the eldest son of Mpezeni I by the selected wife in segment 4 tried to assume the name of his father's father, Zwangendaba. This was in accord with his structural position as representing the interests of the founder of the segment as against those of the

¹ Lancaster, 'Chronology', p. 80; Bryant, *Dictionary*, s.v. *isi-zinda*. cf. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 401. Lancaster implies that the selected wife was called *ikhulu*. This seems unlikely in view of the Zulu use of *i(h)khulu* for the senior left-hand wife.

611 reigning lord of the segment. It is probable that in this instance
643 the divergence of interest had been increased by the shooting of
Ngingu, for Mpezeni II, son of Ngingu and grandson of Mpezeni I,
was only a young boy and in the hands of guardians who were
commoners and who might respond to pressure from their ward's
father's paternal half-brother. So far as can be gathered from the
published account of the meeting called by the Administration to
[648] discuss the matter, the young Paramount was supported by the
lords of segments 12, 14 and 17 and by the senior lieutenants of
segment 10. He was opposed by the heads of segments 9, 13 and 16
and by the senior lieutenant of segment 4. Segment 15 seems not
to have taken part in the dispute. Thus the main cleavage appears
to have been between segments 10 and 12 on the one hand and the
residue of 4 on the other. Segment 13, in terms of its structural
position, was on the wrong side; this may have been connected
with the fact that the regional governor of Mpezeni I who led
segment 13 was born in the headquarters of segment 4. After a
quarrel about succession to his father's office of lieutenant in that
segment, he moved to segment 10 where he found favour with the
chief and was later promoted to regional governor. In the 1903
dispute he apparently transferred his support back to his natal
segment.²

The attempt to assume the name Zwangendaba failed. The
young chief's supporters outnumbered their opponents at the
meeting and his spokesmen argued that he had been recognized by
all the other chiefs and by the Administration as Paramount of the
whole Ngoni country. If his rival took the name he would be led
to usurp the authority of the young Paramount. The Native
Commissioner then ruled that the name could not be taken.

643 Throughout his reign Mpezeni II was opposed by a half-
611 brother, a son of Ngingu by a different mother. This man was older
than Mpezeni and claimed that his mother had really been Ngingu's
754 great wife, or at least that Ngingu had intended to make her so
before he was shot in 1898. This rivalry took two forms. He
669 endeavoured to bring destruction to the chief and his cattle by
578 sorcery, and on one occasion made what seems to have been a half-
hearted attempt to kill him with a spear. At the same time he
endeavoured to establish his own segment as a county of its own,
and in this he was assisted by others who fancied themselves as
chief of the proposed new county.³ The sorcery failed, not only
because it was merely sorcery, but also because sorcery and

² N.E.R.G.G., 4 (1 August 1903), Supplement. See p. 35.

³ See pp. 143f.

1: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

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divination are not well developed among the Ngoni as means of influencing action. The attempt to establish a new county failed for lack of Administrative support. Chiefs still continue to express their rivalries through sorcery, and would-be chiefs still attempt to establish new counties. 578 643 611 754 669

When Mpezeni II died, his heir was still young and was out of the country at boarding-school. A minor chief, after quarrelling with one of the dead chief's lieutenants about the funeral arrangements, proposed that the heir should remain at school to finish his education and that meanwhile there should be a regency. However the Administration arranged for the immediate return of the heir. 872

The rivalry between the Paramount Chief and his minor chiefs shows itself in other less dramatic ways. Thus the Paramount Chief's advisers told me that all cases coming on appeal from the courts of minor chiefs were heard in the Paramount Chief's own court of first instance, and that only if the verdict given there was not accepted was the case referred to the Appeal Court which was held at the administrative centre of the Paramount Chief's county every month. The minor chiefs and their advisers told me that cases sent on appeal from them went direct to the Native Appeal Court, and emphasized that this court was composed of several minor chiefs and their councillors, called upon in rotation. In practice, as I observed in the course of my work, sometimes one procedure was followed, sometimes the other. 643 578 692

On the other hand, the minor chiefs and other politically important people support the Paramount Chief in his relations with the Administration. When recently Ngoni thought that the Administration was not treating the Paramount Chief with the respect due to his position, two minor chiefs endeavoured to organize a petition to the Administration on the matter. When the Paramount Chief's deputy was put in prison by the Administration for embezzlement, it was a minor chief who protested most strongly to the Administration. However dissatisfied the minor chiefs and people may be with any particular Paramount Chief, there is little dissatisfaction with the Paramount Chieftainship. This is still the feature of their organization which in Ngoni eyes most clearly marks them off from their neighbours, and which most clearly links them in their present lowly condition to the exploits of their illustrious forefathers. 643 648 685 186

3. *The chief's advisers*

The men who advise the chief, who enjoy his confidence and his hospitality, belong to a number of different categories. In each 634 643 645

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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the post of deputy is still of significance,⁷ but in the life of the county the chief's deputy does not play a great part. One man appointed as chief's deputy went to Southern Rhodesia but no one has been appointed in his place and the chief manages without a deputy. 634 645

Another traditional post which still functions is that of chief's messenger.⁸ This post is quite distinct from that of district messenger who is an employee of the Administration, and of Native Authority messenger. The district messengers and Native Authority messengers are full-time civil servants, while the chief's messengers are only called upon from time to time and are not paid. The county chief nominates one man for each cluster of half a dozen villages or so in his county to be responsible for informing the village headmen in his cluster of forthcoming county meetings and royal hunts. Sometimes a man who has been nominated accepts his post reluctantly, but it is difficult for him to refuse, and an ambitious man may welcome the appointment for the contact it gives him with his chief. 202 634 624

The royal descent-name *jere* is held by all patrilineal descendants of Zwangendaba's father and by the patrilineal descendants of various other people who were given the name by Zwangendaba or Mpezeni I.⁹ Only two county chiefs do not bear this name. People who do not hold it regard all those who do as kinsfolk of the Paramount Chief, and from time to time in the appointment of men to office, the common people have insisted that not all the posts should go to men bearing this name. The Administration has regarded all men named *jere* in the same way, and in its efforts to counter nepotism has made similar stipulations. A simple dichotomy of this kind overlooks the divisions within the royal house and between the agnatic kinsmen of the Paramount Chief and those who have acquired the name by other means. Distant agnatic relationship may imply less identity of interest than close non-agnatic ties. Nevertheless the appointment of councillors and others with non-royal descent names does assist the notion that the people as well as the chief have interests in the common good and share the responsibility of pursuing it. 611 643 551 634 [648]

From time to time efforts are made to create new chieftainships. We have already mentioned one attempt.¹⁰ The initiative comes usually from the junior kinsman of a chief to whom he has [645] 634 668

⁷ See my 'Village headman', pp. 100-6.

⁸ *Linyasa*. cf. Zulu *i(li)nyasa*, messenger sent by a king or chief.

⁹ See Bruwer, *Mbiri*, p. 23, for the categories of persons bearing the royal descent name.

¹⁰ See p. 140f.

1: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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these need the support and co-operation of the African community. The Administration has consulted Ngoni and other Native Authorities on such matters as agricultural control, the emigration of women to the railway line, provision of better schools, and so on. In 1948 the number of councillor posts was reduced. Instead of employing councillors for general duties, each of the four councillors remaining, now receiving a much higher salary than before, has been given a specific task, the care of roads, the promotion of agriculture, the efficient use of school facilities, and the co-ordination of the work of the Native Authority as a whole. The Administration has attempted to make these four councillors, together with the ten Northern Rhodesian chiefs, into a formal council competent to take decisions without always referring to the people as a whole. 648
645

So far this attempt has not been very successful, but the power of the four councillors is certainly greater than that of their more numerous and lower-paid predecessors. The court clerks have been overshadowed by these new men and left behind in these new activities. Literacy is becoming common and clerks are no longer in demand as secretaries to chiefs. The Native Authority is beginning to employ men whose jobs do not take them to court at all. [212]

The present range of posts whose emoluments are handled by the Native Treasury is shown in Table VIII. 647

All these posts are filled by the Native Authority in agreement with the Administration. It is easy to show how a large proportion of the employees are connected to the chiefs and senior lieutenants by kinship, but this fact is not as significant as it might appear. The Ngoni possess nowadays what may be called an omni-directional kinship system in which ties of kinship can be traced as convenient through fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, husbands and wives, and by any combination of these. It would indeed be surprising if Native Authority employees could not trace genealogical connexion with chiefs and their lieutenants, for so can nearly everyone in Ngoniland. There is no formal selection procedure but a chief may announce at a county meeting that there is a post to be filled and those present may suggest names. Alternatively a chief may discuss the matter with his advisers and then offer the post to the man they decide on. Occasionally a man seeking employment approaches the Paramount Chief in the hope that there may be a post to be filled. Thus although those who live near the chief, or who make it their business to see him and drink with him frequently stand a greater chance of being chosen, choice is not restricted to these people. [611] ●

[see page 152, category 116, -Analyst]

[Text continues on page 153]

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for a few heaps of stones hidden among the trees on the tops of hills. People visit back and forth freely, except for the control imposed at the customs barrier on the one lorry road. Many people grow vegetables in Nyasaland, where there is more land, and sell them in Northern Rhodesia, where there is a better market.

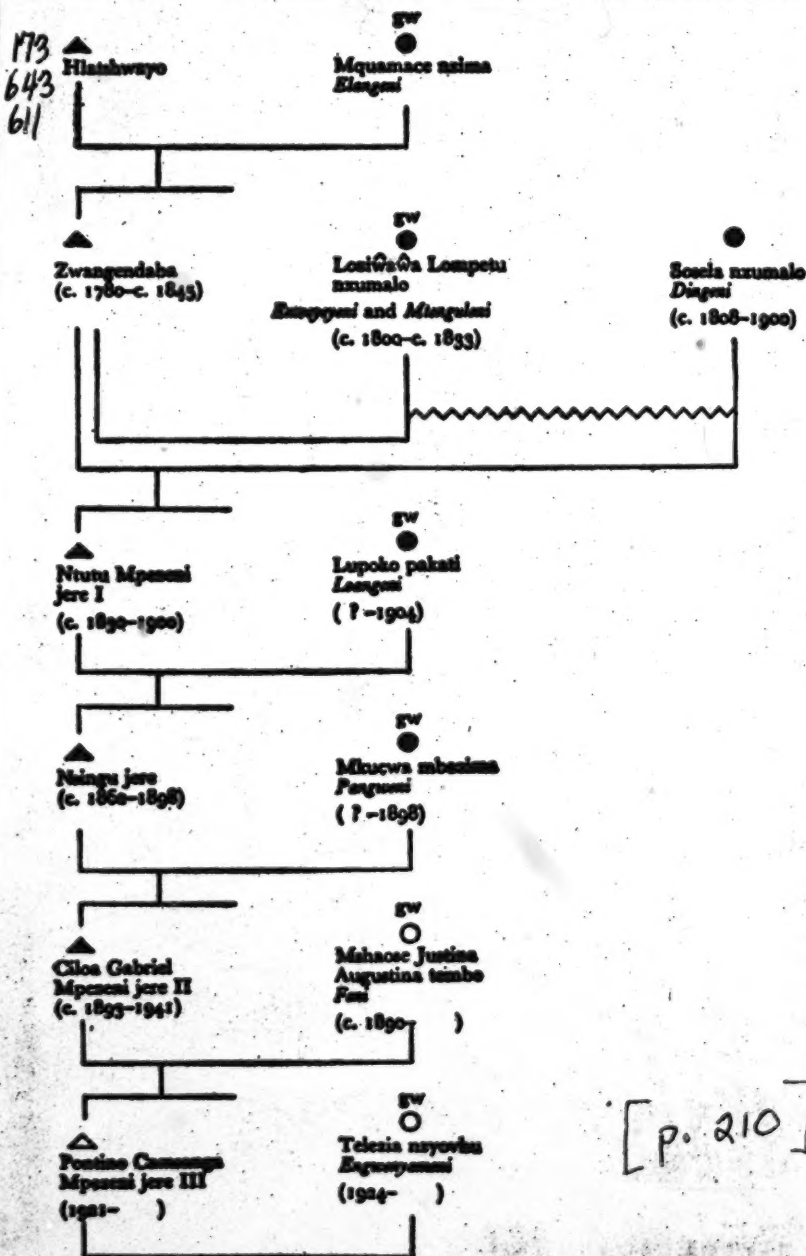
While this territorial proximity gives rise to a multitude of ties linking individuals across the border, it does not lead to new political relations between the counties with a common boundary. Such political relations as do persist are survivals from the old order. Although the formal structure of the Native Court system, as determined by the Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia Administrations, does not permit it, cases sometimes come on appeal from the Nyasaland counties to Mpezeni. There is official visiting between chiefs across the border, and when the Paramount Chief is short of food he may ask the Nyasaland chiefs to send him a few baskets of maize. But despite the nearness of the Nyasaland chiefs to Mpezeni in spatial terms, their political interests lie mainly in the opposite direction. They are the only two Ngoni chiefs in that district of Nyasaland and most of the chiefs whom they meet are Cewa. Their Administration is separate from that in Northern Rhodesia, their laws are different, and they look towards Zomba rather than Lusaka as the seat of Administrative power. We have noted how Mpezeni I contemplated moving into Nyasaland in 1897. As late as 1922, when the Native Reserve scheme was under discussion, Mpezeni II made some preliminary soundings on moving across the border, but already by 1946 such projects were overshadowed by the prospects of federation for the two countries of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

The people of the two Nyasaland counties are subject to the same general influences as are their Northern Rhodesia neighbours in such matters as increasing dependence on an exchange economy and the development of a cognatic or omni-directional kinship system in which links can be traced through spouses as well as through fathers or mothers. Yet even in economic activity there are significant differences. In Nyasaland, Africans grow tobacco for sale, while the Ngoni in Northern Rhodesia are not able to do so; recruiting for the Rand gold-mines is allowed in Nyasaland and prohibited in most of Northern Rhodesia, including the Fort Jameson area.

The annual meetings of the African Provincial Council of the Eastern Province are attended by representatives from each tribe in the province, two people from Fort Jameson township, the Provincial Commissioner and sometimes a representative of the

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Mpezeni

SKELETON GENEALOGY OF MPEZENI CHIEFTAINSHIP



(Names of segments founded for queens shown in *italics*; other symbols as in Diagram 1; rotated through ninety degrees. Years of birth and death shown in brackets.)

CHAPTER III

NGONI CULTURE

563 AMONG the mixed ethnic elements in the Ngoni kingdoms the ruling aristocracy were those whose ancestors were of Swazi and trans-Zambesi origin, and whose clan descent names established them as belonging to the true Ngoni group. The families with these clan names formed also a social aristocracy in the villages where they lived, in the areas of the chiefs and *alumuzana*, and in the Ngoni kingdoms. This social status, established primarily by the clan name, was visible in the position of the huts in the village, arranged at the head of the kraal; in the leading role played by the senior members of these families on all ceremonial occasions; and in the practice of a number of customs which were defined as Ngoni. Ngoni culture, as seen in social and ritual life, was a series of interwoven patterns of social organization and social behaviour. We shall outline these patterns here in order to bring together many of the forms and practices described in the rest of the book. In a more homogeneous society it would have been possible to find in these patterns a consistent and clearly defined culture. Yet one of the main problems in studying Ngoni culture in the 1930's was that there were many variations of each pattern and the anthropologist was all the time trying to find out what degree of cultural conformity existed among the Ngoni aristocracy. Of the different aspects of culture reviewed in this chapter, the ritual pattern was the one most consistently followed, and it was the one in which the Ngoni social aristocracy most clearly demonstrated that they had a distinctive common culture which was found in both kingdoms and in the secession states.

(a) Kinship pattern

- 611 Like the South-eastern Bantu from whom they came the Ngoni were patrilineal in descent and inheritance. Marriage was negotiated by go-
- 583 between and concluded through the handing over of cattle, and the term *lobola* was used for the cattle exchanged in this form of marriage. An Ngoni woman married by this form was known as *mlobokazi*. A
- 593 strict interpretation in the courts was given to this form of marriage as it affected the ownership and custody of the children. The children of
- 586 a *lobola* marriage contract belonged to their father and could be claimed by him if the marriage broke up, or on the death of their mother.
- 591 Traditionally, virilocal residence was an Ngoni custom, and it was supported by the house system whereby the male members of each house
- [592] formed a group with economic interests in common through the joint ownership of the cattle in the name of the house. A widespread variant

NGONILAND AND THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN IT
 recognition of the Paramount's ^{Military Service, obedience to the law,} supremacy were therefore 182
 the main traditional forces uniting the mixed populations
 in the kingdoms.

Ngoni society

Although all people living in the Ngoni kingdoms were 641
 subjects of the Paramount, only those who could trace their
 descent from families who crossed the Zambezi River were
 recognized as 'true Ngoni'. Four main characteristics marked
 off this true Ngoni group from the rest. The first was their
 clan name, giving them an authentic origin south of the (614)
 Zambezi. The second was a marriage contract sealed by
 handing over cattle, which established the offspring as (588)
 'children of their fathers', for, as they said, 'where the
 children are, the cattle are not'. The third was patrilineal (611) ●
 descent and inheritance through the male line, and patri- (428)
 local residence at marriage, so that the wife came as a (591)
 'stranger' to her husband's people and village. The fourth
 was membership of a 'house', the social group of male (592)
 members of Ngoni families with their wives and children
 round a leading woman. Everyone was born into a 'house'
 and the men remained in it for life, the women until their
 marriage. For special reasons children could be adopted (587)
 into another house than the one into which they were born.

In a few of the smaller villages of North Nyasaland, con- 621
 sisting of ten to fifteen huts, all the men were true Ngoni, 184
 descendants of one or more former warriors in the same
 regiment, who had chosen to set up their own villages after (701)
 the British had taken over the country. In such villages the
 cultural pattern of Ngoni life could be seen clearly, but they
 were not typical of the Ngoni kingdoms. There was always
 a mixture of peoples in the larger villages, dominated by a (563)
 group of true Ngoni families.

This group of true Ngoni families were the social and 186
 cultural aristocracy of these villages. They considered them- 563
 selves superior to and distinct from the other ethnic elements 621

VILLAGE LIFE FOR OLDER BROTHERS AND SISTERS

or thirteen, the girls began to take part in aguma dances 562 with the boys. This was on a village basis and organized with 535 a view to competition with other villages. In practising such 628 dancing, as we shall see later, the girls were often by them- 561 selves, though when getting ready for a competition they joined with the boys' group.

The Ngoni girls' circle was to some extent split into the 591 households to which the girls belonged. There was no com- 561 mon residence or common eating-place for all the group, to correspond with the boys' dormitory and eating together at the kraal gate. Generally the girls continued to eat in their mothers' compound with their own younger brothers and sisters. They sometimes ate with the widowed aunt or grandmother with whom they slept, but the other practice was more common. This meant that Ngoni girls who bore the clan name of their father continued to live in the compound of their mother who might not be of a high-ranking Ngoni clan. [611] • In such cases the grandmother and the father's elder sister kept a sharp eye on the training and deportment of the girl.

The Ngoni girls' circle was an exclusive group. Unlike the 561 dormitory where all village boys mixed up, the Ngoni girls, 614 in virtue of bearing their father's clan name, tended to remain as a distinctive group. They were members of their father's house until they married; and when that took place [583] it was they who could cause cattle to flow into the herd belonging to that house. It was partly for this reason, the trans- 858 fer of cattle, that the Ngoni women of that house, particu- 855 larly the grandmother, watched closely the bringing up of the girls from the second teeth stage onward. If she thought the training of the girl was unsatisfactory, because of the carelessness or doubtful character of the girl's own mother, the [597] grandmother might discuss with the girl's father the advisability of arranging for the girl to be adopted into another household or into a collateral house. The reason for this was 581 that when marriage negotiations began and the prospective 858 parents-in-law made inquiries about the girl's character and

segment of the residential system was recognized and institutionalized. Furthermore, it is in line with this thesis that, in arranging the marriage of recent captives, no great attention was paid to the establishment of farflung affinal links. Frequently a man and a woman who had been allocated to the same captor, and whom they both addressed as 'father', married one another on his instructions. Payments made in these marriages were small or non-existent. Recent captives were too low in the hierarchical structure to be concerned about reinforcing their position by horizontal ties. Their ambitions were directed to securing promotion by becoming lieutenants of their captors.

5. *Autonomy of marriage*

The pattern of segmentation of the residential system was continually changing. In part this was due to proliferation downwards, that is, by the process of increasing segmentation between brothers and between fathers' sons. In addition to this process political promotion and death in war altered the relative position of the segments associated with particular people. Marriage itself was a social process which, in so far as the relationship between man and wife was concerned, did not react directly on the residential system. This system was based on patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence and the movements of women, except at the level of the queens, were from one point of view irrelevant to the system. It was the grouping of children round their mother, in contrast to their father's children by other wives, which related the marriages of one generation to the patterns of segmentation of the next. A woman with no children in her house, whether her status was high or low, was structurally irrelevant to the residential system.

Marriage was also largely independent of the central government. Warfare, not domesticity, was the right and proper occupation of young men, and the age at which men married for the first time was probably about thirty. Informants all stressed that in the old days first marriage took place at later ages for both men and women than it does now. Wiese implies that girls were married any time after puberty,²² but my informants stated that girls did not usually marry until they were aged about twenty to twenty-five. Men and women were organized into parallel age-sets, usually referred to as regiments, and corresponding regiments used to dance and frolic together. Sometimes a man took a wife from the regiment corresponding to his own, but there does not seem to have been any positive obligation to do so. Particular regiments were not prevented from marrying, as among the Zulu, and all the tales of the Paramount Chief intervening in the affairs of warriors are phrased in terms of the chief instructing a laggard to find himself a wife when all his age mates had already married. The chief did however interfere

²² Wiese, *op. cit.* 'Epediqa . . .', p. 473, and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 191.

583 had been paid, it was her husband and not her father who initiated
593 proceedings against her and her lover. Residence was equated
613 with political allegiance, and therefore it was inappropriate that
[591] her children should live in their father's village until he had acquired
rights in them, that is until he had acquired rights in *genetricem*
in his wife. These rights were transferred with the payment of
bridewealth. The holder of the rights both in *uxorem* and in
genetricem was the husband, but on his death the rights in *uxorem*
passed to a junior patrilineal kinsman of the same generation while
the rights in *genetricem* remained in the man's own segment. If the
woman was barren, it was incumbent on those who had been
recompensed for the transfer of rights in *genetricem* to provide
another wife whose children occupied the position of children of
the barren wife.

[428] Nowadays the legalization payment confers rights in *uxorem*
and bridewealth rights in *genetricem*. Rights in *genetricem* are
inherited in the same way as before, but rights in *uxorem* do not
pass automatically to a younger brother of the husband on his
death. If a widow agrees to be inherited, and a younger brother
[581] willing to have her, then he acquires rights in *uxorem* over her without
any further legalization payment. If, however, either no younger
brother is forthcoming or the widow is unwilling, the rights revert
to the woman's own group, who cannot themselves exercise them.
When she takes a new husband he makes the legalization payment
to them, and not to the kin of the dead husband, and thereby acquires
his rights in *uxorem*. If rights in *genetricem* have already been
transferred to the dead husband, the new husband can never acquire
them. If at the beginning of a marriage bridewealth is offered, its
acceptance transfers both rights in *uxorem* and in *genetricem*.

611 Whereas the rights in *genetricem* were definite in the old system,
591 in the new they are vague and of doubtful value. In the old scheme
602 they were related to position in a residential system of which one
178 of the generating principles was patrilineal descent and succession.
With the breakdown of this system one can no longer say so clearly
that a man belongs to one group of kinsmen rather than another.
The lineage segment is no longer a significant group with spatial
reference and a hierarchy of authority. Kinsmen, however related,
who live near one another tend to help each other, visit one another,
and support each other in quarrels and in visits to court. Some of
the men and women who go to court in support of A will also go in
support of B, while others will not. B shares certain supporters with
C, and so on. The men and women who are relatives and neighbours
cannot be divided into a collection of mutually exclusive groups,
for membership of one man's group partly overlaps with membership
of another's, and every man has, as it were, a different set of people,
611 some of them patrilineal kin, some matrilineal, and some affines,
591 whom he is prepared to support. There is no widely-held indigenous
602 theory of procreation such as in other cultures provides a rationaliza-

tion for associating children with one parent rather than the other. There is only the one proud dogma that the Ngoni, unlike their neighbours, are a patrilineal virilocal people. This reflects the actual dominance of the virilocal mode of residence but does not furnish a rule to which appeal can be made in specific cases. The only definite unit to which a man can be said to belong is his village, and such few attempts as are made to enforce rights in *genetricem* are expressed in terms of residence in villages. In marriages that are made outside the tribe, rights in *genetricem* become significant, for a child is not likely to wander to and fro between one tribe and another hundreds of miles away in the same way as children change from one village to another within the kingdom. Here then we find more attention paid to the payment of bridewealth and to rights in *genetricem* and these rights are enforceable through the police checks on buses and lorries. 611 591 602 [62] 648 583

If a man is away working his interests are represented by his kinsfolk. They cannot exercise his rights in *uxorem* for him, but if they are violated they can act on his behalf. His permission is necessary, however, before they can proceed to the court, and if they are awarded damages then they are under some sort of obligation to hand over the money to him when he returns. There was no situation comparable to this in the old system, for men did not go away for years at a time, and the violation of rights in *uxorem* was punishable by death. 573

The position of the man as holder of rights in *uxorem* over his wife is reinforced to some extent by mystical ties believed to connect the couple, and at the same time the man can fortify his rights by the use of medicines to ensure fidelity. During pregnancy, for a short while after childbirth, and during menstruation, the actions of man and wife affect one another automatically, and each is placed in danger of illness by the failure of the other to observe their mutual obligations. To protect his rights in *uxorem* a man may doctor his wife so that possible violators may be deterred by the fear of mystical retribution as well as action in the courts. 593 581

7. Mystical beliefs and marriage stability

The mystical connexion believed to exist between a man and his wife serves to define their relationship more closely, for this same connexion does not hold between a woman and her husband's kin or between a man and his wife's kin. The adultery of a pregnant woman's brother-in-law, like her husband's adultery, may threaten the peace of her local group of relatives and friends, and may even lead her to change her village or go to the court as a supporter. The important distinction between the adultery of her husband's brother and her husband's adultery is that the former does not automatically endanger her delivery while the latter does. A man confesses his adultery when his own wife gives birth, not when her sister is in labour. This connexion is definite, and is not extended 581 582

198 as one from a graded segmentary society organized on a basis of patrilineal descent and modified by political promotion to a society of villages organized on a basis of omnidirectional kinship. In the past a man lived in the same place as his father and in charge of the segment allocated to him by his father. Now a man lives where he can find relatives of one kind or another who may be related to him agnatically, cognatically, affinally, or by any combination of these ways. He is not even restricted to consanguineal relatives, as in cognatic kinship systems, for he can affiliate himself to some person who is linked cognatically neither to him or to any of his potential descendants, as when he goes to live with his father's wife's mother's brother. Genealogical connexion can be traced along all possible paths and there are no mechanisms by which one path is automatically favoured or by which the length of a path is restricted. In consequence the genealogical constitution of any local group of relatives is complex, and every man is a potential recruit to many local groups. He selects between the numerous possibilities open to him on the basis of his own inclinations and in response to the various pressures exerted on him by his siblings, his parents, his wife, her parents, and others. Once he has made his choice he can always change his mind and move elsewhere if he finds his neighbours irksome. His wealth, either in cattle or money, is his own and he can take it with him when he moves. There are no rights in land (with the one exception of dry season gardens) which might otherwise tie him to one particular spot. As with residence, so with marriage payments, the formal and informal procedures of marriages, and the values associated with them. In all, considerable variation is tolerated. Indeed, we may well regard variation as a necessity in this system, for every man is subject to a mass of potential conflicting claims and he cannot possibly honour them all simultaneously. Variation occurs not because of different practices by various sections of the population but rather because of different individual decisions. A man decides for himself whether or not he will pay bridewealth, or take a hoeing party to his wife's mother's garden, or be suspended from the sacraments for marrying a second wife. Yet although he makes these choices himself, he is all the time subject to social pressure from kinsfolk and neighbours who will be affected by his decisions and who therefore try to influence them. A woman is not quite so free as a man, but she too can make many decisions for herself, and her relatives must appeal to her if they wish to influence her, for they cannot force her against her will. Man and wife living together are in a unique relationship which is personal and non-transferable, yet they live in the midst of kinsfolk and the well-being of one relative is the concern of all. The quarrels of a married couple are a danger to the cohesion of the local group in which they live, while the longer they live together, fertile and peaceful, the greater the local solidarity.

Down District of the Nyasaland Protectorate.

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10. *Forbidden and Enjoined Unions (Ngoni).*

The Ngoni are patrilineal, and in the case of a mixed Ngoni-Chewa marriage the child always takes the clan (*vide infra*, Section IV) of the father, whether bride-price has been paid or not. The children of brother and sister may marry each other, but not the children of two brothers or half-brothers, nor the children of two sisters or half-sisters. As with the Achewa, so also with the Ngoni it is no longer considered incestuous to marry someone of the same clan. 611 582 614

11. *Forms of Marriage (Ngoni).*

When an Ngoni wishes to marry, he sends a male friend without a gift to inform the girl's father of his desire. The father calls his wife, male relations and headman to discuss the matter; and, if they agree to the proposal, the friend returns with the news to the prospective bridegroom who, several days later, despatches his *ambasador* with a present to the *ambasador* of the girl. There are always two *ambasadors* on each side, neither more nor less. A father is ineligible; and brothers, sister's sons and fellow-villagers are generally chosen, as they are more likely to be at hand if required at any time. The present is only symbolic, and generally takes the form of a goat, though in the case of a wealthy bridegroom it may be a cow or something equally substantial. This part of the procedure is known as *ku-caga*, and as soon as the present has been received by the bride's father, the marriage is valid in law. 584 [583]

A few days later, the groom sends a friend to conduct the girl to his house. She comes with several elder women and other girl friends, but her mother may not join the party. The bridegroom provides for them a feast of beer and meat in commensuration with his wealth. He presents beads to his wife, this ceremony being known as *ku-tsetsetsa*, and sends a cloth (known as *mbumba*) to her mother, after which the women return home on the same day without commensation having been effected. [574] [431]

About a week later, accompanied by a small boy, the man proceeds by night to his father-in-law's house, and is given an empty house, where he sleeps with his wife. He must avoid being seen by any of the villagers, and therefore departs before daylight, going to a neighbouring village for food and rest, and returning on the following night, when the same precautions must be observed. [833]

On the second morning he goes back to his village, and after two or three weeks sends a friend to fetch his wife. This time she comes openly, and sleeps with him for two or three nights in any available hut, after which she returns to her father. [833]

The husband then begins to build her house at his village, and to pay the bride-price. This process is known as *ku-kunda*, or *ku-kunda mbumba*. The *mbumba*, or bride-price, may consist of cows, or cash, or other goods, and its value is fixed according to the standing of the parties. If the bride is fully grown, payment should be completed within four or five months. Nowadays, however, Ngoni girls are generally married shortly before they reach the age of puberty, and in such cases a year or two may be allowed; but when the husband is unconscionably dilatory, his father-in-law may oblige him to build a house near his own and to live there until he has fulfilled his contract; and until the bride-price has been paid in full, he cannot expect his wife to reside with him permanently at his own village. 583 581 [582]

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64 charged by him with specific functions relating to the State as a whole, and appear to have exercised general jurisdiction. Other lieutenants were known as the lieutenants of such-and-such a royal village, and were appointed by Mpexeni to look after the queens of the village and to be responsible for the internal ordering of the village.

In addition to these lieutenants each important person had a deputy,¹ who was a patrilineal kinsman of the same generation. Each new holder of the principal office selected his own deputy. The deputy's task was to act for his principal in his absence and to serve as an intermediary between the principal and his lieutenants.

• [611]
[558] All these posts were hereditary in the agnatic line, except for that of deputy, but new posts were continually being created and the holders of other posts fell into disgrace. Some of the lieutenants of Mpexeni were also headmen of their own villages, while other lieutenants were promoted to be regional governors.

631 Increase in population led to increase in the number of villages and
178 of recognizable divisions within villages, both by divisional fission and
161 by the setting up of separate establishments for groups of wives. This process, operating in response to population pressure from below, was assisted from above by the need to give newly created lieutenants and governors their own dependants and their own recognizable residential cluster.

631 The relative position and importance of a segment of the political
641 structure might alter if its leader was killed in battle or if he offended the Paramount. For example, a certain lieutenant who had a village of his own committed adultery with one of Mpexeni's queens. He was
[684] put to death, and all his followers were made to come and live in a
641 royal village. But in addition to the natural increase in the population
727 of any segment, new members were added by capture in war. There
563 was never any distinct class of slaves or captives in the Ngoni State.

[567] Apart from the autonomous families which moved about during the pre-migration period in Natal, the rest of the tribe had been either captured at one time or other on the way north, or had joined the Ngoni of their own volition. On capture, people were assigned to some or other important person, and after a while acquired a certain autonomy of their own. The men were all enrolled into the age-set
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regiment appropriate to their age, and it was possible for them to rise to high positions in the State. No distinction of ethnic origin was

¹ *Mame*, pl. *amame*. Cf. the Tulu term *amame*, younger brother who is sent to the heir.

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241 those who have not been working. Some people choose to do their
273 work in the garden on the day previous to the party, on the theory
476 that working and drinking do not go together. A few people offer
baskets of ground-nuts or other crops or meat in return for a day's
[465] labour, and monetary payments are also known.

Craftsmen

463 There are a number of specialized occupations which give rise to
inter-village trading. Pots are made by women. Some villages have no
323 potter and their inhabitants are dependent on pot-makers in neigh-
[462] bouring villages. Sometimes a woman may acquire a reputation for
pot-making sufficiently high to attract custom even from villages
where there are already pot-makers. Pots are sold in return for their
own volume of maize, or for money, or the customers may be required
to provide sufficient clay for twice the amount of pottery that they
wish to obtain.

285 Basketry is a man's craft, and at the end of the rainy season, when
[462] it is necessary to watch all day in the gardens for monkeys, men with
this skill spend their time at it. Baskets are sold for money or for maize,
and, as with pottery, there is a certain amount of inter-village sale.

759 Herbalists draw their clients from a wider area than do the pot- and
basket-makers, and their contacts with their patients are more intense.
If a man falls sick, the remedies known in the family are tried first, but
if these are unsuccessful he may go to someone who is known for his
wide knowledge of medicines. Patients will travel up to 15 miles or
so to consult a herbalist, who may require them to live in his village
to receive treatment. Payment for medical treatment is sometimes
demanded part in advance, but other practitioners ask for a fee only
when a cure has been effected. Since the establishment of medical
[648] services by the Administration the way has been open for the medical
orderlies to operate in opposition to the herbalists, using misappro-
priated European drugs.

III. THE FAMILY

Principles of Descent

- 611 The Ngoni are traditionally a patrilineal patrilocal people paying
[591] bride-wealth with cattle. This tradition is reflected in modern prac-
[583] tice only to a limited extent. Many of the men and women who were
[184] incorporated after Zwangendaba had crossed the Zambezi came from

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matrilineal matrilocal tribes, and the values associated with these systems of organization were not entirely forgotten. With the decline of the central power of the chieftainship after the conquest, cultural diversity within the tribe increased, so that at the present time we have a wide range of variation in the kinds of family found between one village and the next, and even within the same village. In particular, the irreconcilable difference between the organization of unilineal kin-groups on patrilineal and matrilineal principles appears to have led to a condition in which, for most of the tribe, the only groups of relatives that emerge as corporate groups are stocks, people with a common ancestor from whom they are descended through sons or daughters or both. These stocks are not mutually exclusive, and a man may think of himself at one time as belonging to one stock and at another time to another stock. Frequently alongside the true members of a stock there are other people who claim to belong to the same 'family' who are in fact related affinally to the members of the stock. The organizing factor in domestic affairs is not kinship by itself but common residence combined with genealogical connexion. A stock, with its affinal accretions, emerges as the core of a corporate group of kindred only when its members live near one another and meet each other frequently. The strongest groups are those people of a stock who are living alongside one another in the same part of a village.

The use made of double affinal links in establishing attachment to a stock is noticeable. For example, a child will call a man who is his mother's divorced husband's wife's divorced husband by the term *father* (see Diagram 4 below). A man may bring into his village a wife from outside who may come with her children by a former husband. When grown up, the sons may also bring in wives accompanied by their children from former marriages. These children grow up to regard the village as their own and to think of themselves, in certain contexts, as belonging to the 'family' of the headman of the village. Informants in a village with a most complicated kinship structure will say 'We are all one family here'.

Kinship Terminology

The variation in the kinship systems of the different tribes from which the Ngoni recruited their members has led to some confusion in the use of kinship terms. Most of the terms now used are in the

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said to be due to their definite knowledge of common patrilineal descent rather than due to the common name. At the other extreme are names such as *tembe*, *lugu*, and *phili*, which are derived from the neighbouring tribes of the region and are very common and have no connotation of exogamy. 551 614 582

Prior to the arrival of the Ngoni descent-names were inherited in the matrilineal line by the Cewa, Nsenga, and other tribes of the Eastern Province. Under Ngoni influence, the rule was reversed and the great majority even of recently incorporated Ngoni now bear the same names as their fathers. Some people do take the descent-names of their mother, as, for example, a child born in adultery who is not accepted by its mother's husband, or one whose father dies young so that it is brought up by a relative of its mother. As with the Tonga of Mazabuka, some descent-names have locally alternative forms, and in one instance men and women take different names.¹ 177 611 551 [848]

Appeal is sometimes made for protection and help on the basis of a common descent-name, but this is not a very strong tie and is invoked only when no closer link can be found. The principal uses of descent-names are in polite forms of address and in connexion with beer-drinking. 602 551 571

Marriage Payments

The initiative in choosing a spouse usually lies with the man. A woman who takes too much initiative in this matter is regarded, usually correctly, as likely to be unfaithful. In the old days marriages were more frequently arranged by the parents of the couple concerned, but now this happens only when the man is away. Men who are on the farms or in the mines send money home to brothers or fathers with instructions to find them suitable wives, and to offer the money as the legalization payment. During the 1939-45 War this arrangement was continued by soldiers who were away. 583 584

The most important payment in connexion with marriage is that made by the bridegroom to the bride's father which I shall call the legalization payment.² This payment is the one that establishes unequivocally the right of the husband to damages should his wife commit adultery or be allowed by the court to divorce him. It must be observed, however, that damages may still be awarded to the husband under certain conditions where no legalization payment has 583 671

¹ The name *sulu* for a man becomes *sulu* for a woman in certain areas.

² *Cinade*, no plural. Cf. Young, *Customs and Folk Lore*, p. 61.

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701 national basis to include all the adolescent males in the tribe, what-
 182 ever their origin. Women were grouped into corresponding regi-
 167 ments. This system broke down after the first World War, when so
 [162] many young men went away in the fighting. To-day the great exo-
 221 dus is not to war but to work, to the mines of Southern Rhodesia
 464 and elsewhere, and the incidence of labour migration is so high
 that it is not unknown to find a village in which there is no adult
 male resident. Part of the exodus is seasonal, and many men and
 women, as well as children, find employment on the tobacco farms
 of the district and in Fort Jameson Township.

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241 The staple crop is maize, of which enough is grown to pro-
 432 vide in good years for a small surplus for sale to the tobacco farms
 and the Administration. Tobacco is not grown by Africans for sale,
 except within the villages, but vegetables and a little rice and fin-
 231 ger millet are sold to Europeans. Cattle are kept in the fly-free
 [583] areas, and play an important but diminishing part in social life as
 [681] the means of paying bridewealth, but the sale of cattle is not at
 present a regular affair. Their principal use is as a form of capital
 investment that can be called up to meet damages and fines awarded
 by the Courts.

161 The population of the tribe is about 60,000, the majority liv-
 131 ing in the Ngoni and Msandile Reserves, both near to Fort /5/ Jame-
 621 son. The remainder live on the tobacco farms or in Fort Jameson
 Township. Villages vary in size from settlements of three or four
 huts to large clusters containing up to 500 people. The average size
 of a village is about thirty huts with a population of 100.

611 The Ngoni conquerors reckoned descent in the male line,
 while most of the people whom they conquered and with whom they
 married traced descent through the mother. To-day for practical
 [178] purposes, descent is omnilateral, in that any connection through a
 male or female ancestor can be made use of as the occasion demands.